agenda INSTITUTE

Policy Brief

CHILD LABUOR IN ALBANIA

Providing a Solution

May 2008

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

Child labour remains a central obstacle to realizing the right of all children to education and to protection from violence, abuse and exploitation.

Article 32 of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child which Albania ratified in 2001 provides that:

> "[...]*States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development."*[1]

This definition is the one which is also now used by the International Labour Organization [hereinafter ILO] to differentiate between child work and child labour, the latter of which only is considered as harmful for a child development.

Today, there seems to be a rather large consensus against child labour and most countries recognize the need to eradicate it. Proof of this, can be found, for example, in the large majority of countries which have ratified the different ILO conventions on child labour (the most important of which being N° 138 *Concerning the minimum age for admission to employment* [2] and N°182 *on the Worst forms of Child Labour*[3]) as well as the success of the IPEC programme put in place by that same organisation for the main purpose of combating child labour, especially in its worst forms.

However, child labour has yet to be completely eradicated and is still highly present and visible in a number of developing countries, among which figures Albania.

Ratification of Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 is only a first step, as ratifications need to be accompanied by concrete action against child labour. Political commitment, through the adoption of coherent policies in the areas of poverty reduction, basic education and human rights, is central to the progress, both past and present, made by countries in combating child labour. Economic growth alone will not eliminate child labour, although it is clearly important. Policy choices matter, and those which open gateways of opportunity for poor people are central to efforts aimed at eliminating child labour.

Therefore, further action is needed in Albania to address this issue and, for that purpose, this paper proposes to examine the specific challenge of eradicating child labour in Albania and present a plan of action in the form of a draft legislation which goal will be to reinforce the existing framework to protect children against child labour as well as providing for protection in other sectors where it does not exist as of yet.

---

[1] Article 32 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNGAR 44/25, 20 November 1989; ratified by Albania in 2001.
[2] ILO Convention n°138 *Concerning the minimum age for admission to employment*, 6 June 1973.
[3] ILO Convention n°182 *Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour*, 17 June 1999.

1.1 The existing legal framework for the protection of children against child labour in Albania

The Albanian constitution contains specific provisions on child protection. Article 54 upholds the right of every child to protection against violence, bad treatment, exploitation and work that can impair its health or morality and endanger its life or normal development.

Albanian legislation defines the age from which a child is allowed to work. This is 16, with an exception for children aged 14 to 16 during school holidays. This must be light work. From age 16 onwards, there are no restrictions on a child working other than a ban on dangerous work until age 18, and a requirement to have received authorisation from the labour inspectorate.

Albanian legislation requires children to have completed their eighth year of primary education (equivalent to the second year of secondary school in Western European countries). A child starting primary school at age 6 will reach this level at age 14 if he or she do not have to repeat a class. An amendment to this law took effect at the start of the 2004-2005 academic year: a child now has to successfully complete nine years instead of eight. This new limit affects only children beginning their first year of primary school this year; its practical effects will therefore be felt only a few years from now.

In reality, for the most part, the current Albanian legislation simply transposes ILO convention n°138 into the national system; however, it does not provide sufficient enforcement or guarantees of its provisions. These insufficies will be detailed in length throughout this paper.

1.2 The insufficiencies of this framework briefly exposed

One of the main problems which child labour poses, and which is not only specific to Albania but to many developing countries, is that rather than in factories and sweatshops, most child labour occurs in the informal sector, "selling on the street, at work in agriculture or hidden away in houses — far from the reach of official labour inspectors and from media scrutiny."[4]

Furthermore, child labour eradication is closely linked to the enforcement of compulsory education and, more often than not, passing legislation providing for compulsory primary education does not suffice; specific safeguard mechanisms need to be put in place in order to make this a reality. The specific issue of Albania's legislation on compulsory schooling must therefore also be examined; a specific section of this paper will be dedicated solely to this question.

---

[4] *"The State of the World's Children 1997",* UNICEF Report, Geneva, 1997, available at http://www.unicef.org/sowc97/report/

Overall, this paper will demonstrate that the current legislation in Albania is insufficient especially since as it does not address any of these specific issues in sufficient depth. Further measures need to be undertaken and implemented.

1.3 The lack of statistical data regarding child labour in Albania

The lack of accurate and reliable statistical data compiled on the number of children working in Albania poses further difficulty for a quantified analysis regarding the extent of the situation in Albania, however, it is impossible for anyone who has walked the streets of Tirana, Vlore or Korça at any hour of the day or night to ignore the number children working in the streets whether they are selling small goods (cigarettes, gum, etc.) or begging; wherever you go they are present now more than ever. There is undoubtedly a problem and this is only the tip of the iceberg as these are only the most visible (but not the sole) forms of child labour.

The main reason for the relative scarcity of statistical data on child labour in Albania is the low priority it tended to receive in the past. If the elimination of child labour were to become a more fully mainstreamed development objective, it would attract the necessary resources to fill the gap.

Furthermore, the difficulty of determining the extent of child labour is often linked to the difficulty of assessing just how many children are affected by child labour as some of that work is invisible and unacknowledged, as it is absorbed into "piece work" or "quota systems" based on family work units. Through various subcontracting arrangements, commercial agricultural enterprises can disclaim responsibility for any child labour found on their farms and plantations.

Right now there are no reliable statistics on child labour across Albania; however, nongovernmental agencies have carried out surveys of specific regions, but not at national level. Numbers is difficult to assess with any accuracy given that the large majority of these children work in the informal economy. School dropout statistics and observation on the ground suggest, however, the number of Albanian children at work runs into tens of thousands, if we include those visiting school for time to time.

According to the Statistics Institute, 32% of children aged 6 to 17[5] years old are working, while almost 100% of them result enrolled at school. A minority of these children can be found in the worst forms of child labour: begging, building, refuse recycling just to name a few. According to LSMS[6], the principal factor of drop out is the bad financial situation, based on unemployment of parents or other family members or on very low salaries which cannot provide a minimal living standard. This situation is the most visible in rural areas, where the income comes from agriculture, and they are relatively small. LSMS shows that in those cases the trend is predicable: children will start working with their parents or help them with family duties and continue studying at the same time.

[5] A child is 1- 14 years old, 14-24 years –youth, 24 and over adult (UNICEF)
[6] LSMS/ Living Standard Measurement Survey, conducted by INSTAT 2002, 2005

At a certain age (15 as an average) they will drop out school or continue only formally. In this specific case it is not the will of parents to stop education, but the existing conditions that oblige this result.

1.4 The need for further analytical research regarding child labour in Albania

Ideally, in each country a child labour knowledge network would be in place. This is unfortunately not yet the case in Albania. Capable research institutions exist, but child labour is not often on their agenda. It is not surprising that child labour has a low profile in the policy process at the national and international levels. The poor have the weakest voice and their capacity for social action in a hostile political environment is limited.[7]

There is a need to continue to raise awareness about child labour, its nature and extent, its determinants, links to poverty and the labour market, education, economic and social implications, population structure and dynamics, and its potential to act as an obstacle to and retard long-term development. It is also necessary to promote the elimination of child labour as an explicit development objective, and as a part of a poverty reduction strategy. In addition, the growing prominence of child labour concerns has now created an environment in which the formation of child labour constituencies is made easier than in the past.

The first priority of this analysis is to highlight the links, often running both ways, between child labour and the principal objectives of the policy processes into which it is to be integrated. These include poverty reduction of course, but also the development of human resources, universal primary education, economic growth, labour productivity, wage policy, income distribution and population growth and dynamics, as well as more intangible objectives such as improving the country's image abroad.

For example, questions which will need further attention regarding poverty reduction strategies include whether the proposed strategy is able to reach child labour households, easing their income constraints through provision of greater opportunities for productive employment and income generating activities. Certain households need to be targeted as a priority group, reforms of the education system need to ensure affordable access to quality schooling to *all* children, including child labourers, adequate economic incentives need to be envisaged and budgeted to encourage parents to send their children to school and keep them there.

[7] WOOD, G., *"Staying secure, staying poor: The 'Faustian bargain'"*, in *World Development,* Oxford, Vol. 31, No.3, March 2003, p. 456.

Mainstreaming efforts would be considerably strengthened if comprehensive national child labour policies and action programmes already existed. Article 1 of Convention No. 138 requires ratifying member States "*to pursue a national policy designed to ensure the effective abolition of child labour*"[8]. Paragraph 1 of the accompanying Recommendation No. 146 provides guidance on the design of such a policy, noting in particular that:

> "*high priority should be given to planning for and meeting the needs of children and youth in national development policies and programmes and to the progressive extension of the inter-related measures necessary to provide the best possible conditions of physical and mental growth for children and young persons".*[9]

As already argument and highlighted by ILO/IPEC, one of the reasons of the gravity and persistence of the situation is the absence of strong and persuasive national campaigns concerning child labour. Some work of course has been done, but mostly formal and temporary: the absent results are a testimony.

1.5 The main areas in which children work in Albania

Briefly exposed, the main areas in which child labour is present in Albania are farming, selling small goods on the street or at markets, making shoes and clothes (on the premises and at home to help their parents), car wash establishments, sorting through rubbish in the streets, begging, construction, mining, car window cleaning at street crossroads as well as other informal economy activities (ie. carrying luggage the airport, shoe shinning and in some cases trafficking, prostitution and drug smuggling to Western countries and (especially Italy and Greece).[10]

First, in order to propose an appropriate solution to this problem, it is necessary to trace back this problem to its origins to try to understand what are the many factors contributing to its perpetuation and then only, can we focus of the actions that need to be undertaken to eradicate it, leading to the formulation of a plan of action in the form of a draft legislation. A better conceptual grasp of child labour has also gone hand in hand with a better understanding of the shape of the problem and its causes. Various socio-economic factors come together to explain the existence of child labour in Albania. The economic aspects that are often presented as the main causes, however, sociological factors are at least as important.

---

[8] ILO Convention n°138, Op. cit. note 2 at Article 1.
[9] ILO Recommendation n°146 *Concerning the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment*, 6 June 1973.
[10] GRUMIAU, S., *"Child Labour in Albania: Report on the current situation and guidelines for action by Albanian"*, trade unions Report by for the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), Brussels, 2004 available at http://www.icftu.org/www/PDF/AlbaniareportEN.pdf

The ILO traces the origins of child labour to 3 main elements:

- Poverty (and exploitation of this poverty;
- Absence of relevant education;
- Tradition /Culture.

The first one relates to the economical situation of the county and will be detailed when describing the economical factors contributing to child labour, however, in a country like Albania, it is important so understand that sociological factors play a much strong part in the perpetuation of this phenomena.

Furthermore, within the sociological factors, different elements can be identified as part of the cause of this situation. Therefore, while a brief overlook of the economical situation is necessary, the various sociological factors need a more in-depth analysis and among these the most important factor which we will stress is the condition of the education system which is intrinsically linked to child labour for many reasons which will be explained further.

2. MAIN CAUSES FOR CHILD LABOUR IN ALBANIA

2.1 Economic situation: the poverty trap

Child labour is a consequence of poverty as well as a factor in its perpetuation. Child labour is parts of the "Faustian bargain", as some authors have named it, that poor people are forced to make in order to achieve a degree of immediate security.[11] Others have referred to the situation of child labour in developing countries as a being part of a poverty trap: the children who are forced to work at an early age to ensure immediate incomes will usually drop out of school or do poorly in school, therefore, negating their chances at a better job and income in the future.[12]

The idea behind the poverty trap theory is that child labour is both a result of poverty and a way of perpetuating it. Furthermore, child labour, especially in its worst forms, dehumanizes children, reducing them to an economic asset, which in turn fuels spiralling population growth among countries least able to cope. By turning a blind eye to abuse of young workers, it impoverishes and even destroys the human capital that is necessary for the economy to grow in the future. Child labour elimination and poverty reduction through economic development go hand in hand. The relationship is not automatic, however. Policy choices matter and they must be coherent. The pace of child labour elimination accelerates when strategies open up "gateways of opportunity" for poor people.

Therefore, in order to remedy this situation, this poverty trap must be 'tipped' to a society with a low equilibrium of child labour; how this can be done will be discussed at length in the section 2 of this paper which examines the different strategies which can be put in place to combat child labour.

In brief, where development efforts focus on the reduction of rural poverty, when the length of compulsory education is progressively extended and when government agencies, employers, trade unions and others combine forces to enforce minimum age for employment laws and create opportunities for children to avoid the trap of premature work, especially under hazardous conditions, then progress is made in fighting child labour.

---

[11] WOOD, G., Op. cit. note 5, pp. 455-471.

[12] *"The End of Child Labour: Within Reach"*, ILO report, Geneva, 2006, available at http://www.ilo.org/declaration.

2.2 The sociological situation

2.2.1 Importance of education in this context

Maybe the rate of school enrolment in Albania remains high, however, the attendance rate is much lower and this is in direct link with child labour; it can therefore serve as one of its indicators. Child labour is defined by the ILO (international standards) as work which is counter-beneficial to a child education, health or development; therefore, it is not hard to see how work which takes place during schooling hours of affect to capacity to attend or benefit from his schooling experience (he is too tired, etc) can fall into this description.

According to the ILO's global estimates on child labour, close to half of all working children are also enrolled in school. Many IPEC studies have indicated that clear differences did exist between working and non-working children in terms of educational inputs (for example, regular attendance, tardiness or tiredness). Therefore, even in the case where children are able to attend school, they are most likely to be affected in their performance, thus, leading to weaker performance on their part and, eventually, can lead to failure or discouragement on their part and taking away any enthusiasm to attend school in the long run. Consequently, most of these children will be prone to abandon school at an early age in order to pursue work which will guarantee them at least some form of income in the shorter term.

For these reasons, this cycle can be broken only by implementing policies which make education mandatory for these children but also ensure their attendance and provide students in difficulty with sufficient support instead of leaving them on their own. In fact, a recent study by the ILO on child labour found that the elimination of child labour and its replacement by universal education yields enormous economic benefits.[13]

The study reveals the economic character of elimination of child labour as a generational investment, a sustained commitment to our children in order to reap the benefits when they reach adulthood. Hence, taken as a whole, the delayed benefits would more than recoup the costs. Moreover, it has to be noted that some very critical benefits, such as those of investing in education, can hardly be measured in monetary terms – benefits in terms of personal development and enhanced choice. Demonstrating that eliminating child labour is a high-yielding global investment adds impetus to advocacy efforts within the worldwide movement.

[13] *Ibid* p. 47.

2.2.2 Obstacles linked to culture and tradition: the roma population

The large Roma population, which is one of Albania's largest minority populations, poses certain specific problems which, consequently, would require specifically-targeted interventions. One of the main difficulties posed by the Roma population is linked to cultural heritage. In the Roma culture, child labour is not viewed negatively and, in fact, it is seen as normal and highly encouraged. To some extent, many Roma parents perceive children as economical assets; many of these parents will have children for the sole purpose of putting them to work in the hope of securing more income for the entire family.

Therefore, in such a system, it makes it very difficult for children coming from the Roma communities to benefit from education as, on the one hand, they are forced to work for their parents or other member of the community to provide income, while on the other, they often perceive education as a futile exercise.

In addition to this, the Roma community is often held in low esteem by the rest of the population and, to that effect, they are often victim to discrimination, marginalization and exclusion by the rest of the population. At school, this scenario is reproduced as the Roma children will generally keep to themselves and not mix with the others; therefore, missing out on the beneficial experience they might gain from social interaction. This phenomenon is especially manifest in Tirana where only one school has been appointed for the schooling of Roma children, thus, creating aversion by the rest of the population to sending their children there. In the end, they are left to themselves, once again, without any prospect for real social integration.

2.2.3 Public opinion on child labour

Generally speaking, Albanian public opinion is particularly shocked when child labour takes extreme and high-visibility forms (begging, picking over dustbins, etc.) and by child trafficking. On the other hand, however, the population makes light of children selling small goods in the streets, and does not get upset at the fact of children dropping out of school before compulsory school-leaving age. In many cases it fails to link, for example, a child dropping out of school with the danger of his being involved in the worst forms of child labour or trafficking.

As a result, many parents are increasingly no longer giving priority to their children's schooling and preferring to see them working to contribute to family income. Apart from insufficient action by the authorities, a whole series of socio-economic factors exist to explain this situation: economic decline, lack of schools and teachers in certain regions, family breakdown, lack of consciousness of the importance of schooling, vendettas, discrimination against ethnic minorities, etc. One of the particular things concerning child labour in Albania is related to its proper perception: not rarely, in families where the parents are unemployed children work in the streets, even if they are in the age of legal required education. This, according to the mentality which makes it 'easer' for the parents to send their children work in the streets than to do it themselves. This psychology of

the family habits seems to be much stronger than in the other part of the Balkans, even in countries close to Albania as Montenegro, Macedonia or Kosovo, where emigration increases the financial role of the father in the families.

According to recent data gathered by NGOs and trade unions in Albania, Albanians are still unaware of the dangers associated, particularly for children, with leaving the country. In the north and north-east of the country especially, the practice of marrying girls very young appears still fairly widespread. In certain cases this leads to a situation in which the husband or his relations arrange for a departure abroad (Italy, Greece, Kosovo), where, for example, the girl can be forced into prostitution.[14] As well, there are rural areas where is has become common for very young girls to be forced to marry men in migration. This phenomena concerns very poor families, their economic situation and the fact that their daughter enters a biological mature cycle 'forces' them to oblige girls drop education and leave the country.

2.2.4 The impact of instability on the perpetuation of child labour

In ***developing countries***, especially in states which have sustained dramatic economic crises or in former communist countries, there is often a high level of insecurity which prevails among the poorer levels of society. Therefore, feeling the necessity of securing revenues to satisfy their basic needs (which are no longer provided for by the State), such feeling can often lead to putting aside child education to prioritize the income of secure revenues from all members of the family, thus, leading to the encouragement of child labour as a form of remedy to this feeling of insecurity, what some have called a 'copping mechanisms', to deal with this instability and feeling of insecurity.

However, it is paradoxical, as it would be in the interest of these send people to prioritize their children's education as it would insure them a much higher chance for success and higher income in the future; but people living in such conditions tend to see things in a rather day to day fashion. In addition, children are often hit hardest by crises, whatever their nature, and are at increased risk of being trapped in child labour.

[14] GRUMIAU, S., Op. cit. note 8.

3. STRATEGIES TO PUT AN END TO CHILD LABOR

3.1 Tipping the poverty trap

The economist Kaushik Basu has used the concept of multiple equilibrium to illustrate how societies can be trapped into a vicious cycle of poverty with high child labour and how they might be "tipped" towards a virtuous cycle where low child labour maintains itself.[15]

It is possible to reach a new equilibrium in which the forces working for the elimination of child labour combine in a virtuous circle that also becomes self-reinforcing. A society that is caught in a high child labour equilibrium such as Albania must put in place legislation improvements. If child labour is banned and that ban is enforced, primary education up to 14 years is compulsory, and that this is enforced and quality improvements make education attractive to poor children and their families, leading to rising demand for education, the supply of children for the labour market will thereby be reduced. Employers that were using child labour will seek adults to fill those gaps. Enterprises used to employing children may have to invest in new technology, further reducing the demand for child labour. Adult wages and household incomes will rise. Earning enough to get by, parents will invest in their future by sending their children to school, thereby diminishing the supply of child labour further.

In this new situation, families who send their children to work rather than school face social disapproval. The right of children *not* to work will be the social norm. Hence, few children work and that society is in a new equilibrium – the low prevalence of child labour reinforces itself. And once it locks into a new equilibrium it stays there. This becomes a one-time effort.[16] This analysis clearly demonstrates the importance of social norms in the perpetuation or abolition of child labour. In particular, this analysis has illustrated that interventions have to be made on a broad front: economic, social and cultural, which in turn will feed off each other. As a result of this strategic interaction, the whole will be greater than the sum of the parts. Therefore, economic growth is insufficiant and there must be legislative action implementing targeted social policies to combat the problem of child labour in Albania.

Moreover, it is important to acknowledge that today's developing countries have many advantages not available to the first industrial nations a century ago when dealing with this problem, which is a positive enabling environment that is supportive of children's rights and accumulated "how to" knowledge: economic development can no longer be used as an excuse for this situation! In sum, economic growth is important, and progress has been slower where economic progress has lagged behind but economic growth is not enough.

---

[15] BASU, K., "The economics of child labour", in *Scientific American,* New York, Vol. 289, No. 4, Oct. 2003, pp. 84-91.

[16] This is an illustrative and not an exhaustive modelling of these "feedback loops" in child labour elimination; see Wood, op. cit. note 5, on breaking out of the "Faustian bargain" of dependent security.

Countries must combine it with the right policy mix, focusing on equality, human rights, decent work for all adults, and education for all children. The elimination of child labour cannot be achieved in isolation. The improvement of education conditions and number of children attending school in Albania is therefore one the essential factors which will help reduce the number of children involved in child labour, it must therefore be examined in more depth.

3.2 The importance of education in combating child labour

3.2.1 Benefice effect of education

The ability to claim and enjoy the rights of an informed and responsible citizen rests squarely upon a child's access to a good basic education. A quality education, one that encourages children's participation and critical thinking and is infused with the values of peace and human dignity, has the power to transform societies in a single generation. Furthermore, the fulfilment of a child's right to education offers protection from a multitude of hazards, such as a life consigned to poverty, bonded labour in agriculture or industry, domestic labour, commercial sexual exploitation or recruitment into armed conflict.

3.2.2 The Albanian schold system

Government statistics show that the percentage of children of compulsory school age not attending school has fallen to 2% at present, whilst a few years ago it was still as high as 6-7%. For UNICEF[17]education is a vital prerequisite for combating poverty, empowering women, protecting children from hazardous and exploitative labour and sexual exploitation, promoting human rights and democracy, protecting the environment, and influencing population growth. According to that organisation, overall, in Albania about 92 percent of primary school age children are attending primary school. There are not relevant differences between urban and rural areas; it is only 1.6 percent higher in rural area. At national level, there is virtually no difference between male and female primary school attendance. The gender disparity begins at the up-secondary level. While the poor families prefer to sent their boys to up secondary school, this figure is different in the richest families. The poor families are likely to send boys to school when they cannot afford education for all their children. To reach the Millennium Development Goal of gender parity, policy makers have to focus their efforts on rural Albania and on households that suffer from poverty.

However, many have questioned these statistics, pointing out that there is undoubtedly a difference between children who are officially registered in schools and those who regularly attend. This would appear to be particularly pertinent in rural areas where the data supplied by UNICEF further reveal that one quarter of children registered in

[17] Findings from the Albania Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Primary Report, page 18, UNICEF, 2006

the first year do not complete their primary education. There are many reasons for this high rate of children abandoning school in rural areas but the most important can be considered to be is the phenomenon of internal migration.

On the one hand, in the country areas abandoned by families who have left for urban areas, there are sometimes no longer enough children for a school to be maintained while, on the other hand, in urban areas that have recently been settled by thousands of families from remote regions, the number of schools or the capacity of existing schools have not increased apace with the growth of the local population. As a result classes are often overcrowded in the towns and the teaching conditions are not the most desirable. Moreover, while in the communist period school attendance for children under 14 was enforced by penalties which were imposed to sanction violations of this requirement, today, no procedure is enforced in the event of failure to comply with obligatory school attendance though it should be in theory.

Therefore, the need for better enforcement of the laws providing for mandatory schooling as well as those providing sanctions in case of their violation must be considered of first importance and will serve as important instrument in combating child labour.

4. NEED FOR CHANGE: CONCRETE ACTION PLAN

4.1 Comparative analysis

Perhaps the best illustration of what can be done to end poverty is the experience over the last four decades in East and South-East Asia and Brazil. Development in some countries has seen countries such as Malaysia, poorer than Ghana at independence in 1957, take off economically in the 1960s and virtually eradicate US$1-a-day poverty today and achieve universal education. Below are a number of examples from the sub region, where political commitment to reducing poverty and expanding education has had an important bearing on child labour elimination.

4.1.1 The case of Brasil

The history of industrialization in Brazil shows that, as in Britain, it went hand in hand with child labour. For example, in the last decade of the nineteenth century, 15 per cent of workers in industrial establishments in São Paulo were children and adolescents. In 1920, children comprised 40 per cent of the workforce of the textile sector in the state.[18]Child labour remained an important feature of the labour market, and

indeed appeared to grow in intensity in the 1980s. This was also associated with high rates of population growth: around 2.2 per cent annually on average from 1970 to 1990.

This upward trend in child labour in the 1980s, and in particular the emergence of the highly visible phenomenon of street children, began to attract world attention and with it the involvement of NGOs and international agencies such as the ILO and UNICEF. It was against this backdrop that Brazil joined IPEC in 1992 as one of the original six participating countries. The next decade saw impressive developments, as Brazil reached a threshold in the fight against child labour. The activity rate for the 10-17 years aged youth declined by 36.4 per cent from 1992 to 2004. In 1992, a total of 636,248 children were working, compared to only 248,594 in 2004.[19]

Many factors explain the decrease in the incidence of child labour from around the mid-1990s. One reason is the high level of social mobilization in Brazil. A number of NGOs at the local and national levels run programmes aiming at fighting poverty, improving living standards (including basic sanitation, health and education) and promoting fundamental rights.

---

[18] "Boas práticas de combate ao trabalho infantil: os 10 anos do Ipec no Brasil", ILO Report, Brasilia, 2003.

[19] "*O Brasil sem trabalho infantil! Quando? Projeção de estimativas de erradicação do trabalho infantil, com base em dados de 1992-2003",* ILO Report, Brasilia, 200

4.1.2 The case of China

China has 350 million children, accounting for 20 per cent of the world's total. Although there is little hard statistical information on child labour trends in China, the evidence on poverty reduction and educational expansion can be taken as important proxy indicators. In the past 25 years, China has taken more people out of poverty and enrolled more children in school than any other country. There is thus strong circumstantial evidence that this has also had a dramatic impact on child labour in China.

The most important element of China's strategy has been the prohibition of the employment of children who have not attained nine years of schooling. This is probably a unique requirement among developing countries.[20]Furthermore, China has achieved universal education at a lower cost than most other countries which goes to prove that successful efforts do not necessarily entail the largest cost if they are carefully though out.[21]

4.1.3 The case of Turkey

Turkey can point to a significant reduction in child labour in recent years. While roughly 1 million children were engaged in economic activity in 1994, this figure declined drastically to half a million in 1999 – a drop of 50 per cent in five years. This was due to a combination of factors, including the extension in 1997 of compulsory education from five to eight years, covering the 6-14 age group, as well as enhanced awareness The Government's commitment to child labour elimination featured in its 8th Five-Year Development Plan (2001-05), which also sets the goal of providing education to every girl and boy under the age of 14 years. The Plan also addresses the eradication of poverty as the most significant factor behind the elimination of child labour.[22]

Overall, the examples from Asia and Brazil reinforce the message that poverty reduction and mass education are important prerequisites for moving countries to the transition point in child labour elimination. If Brazil and China can manage this historical transition, other countries such as Albania can do it too.

---

[20] COLCLOUGH, C., LEWIN, K., Educating all the children: Strategies for primary schooling in the South, Oxford, Clarendon, 1993, p. 89.
[21] LIANG, X., *China: Challenges of secondary education* , World Bank, Washington D.C., 2001, pp. 15-16.

[22] IPEC project on combating the worst forms of child labour in Turkey – Supporting the time-bound national policy and programme for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour in Turkey (2004-06)

REFERENCES

Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNGAR 44/25, 20 November 1989; ratified by Albania in 2001

ILO Convention n°138 *Concerning the minimum age for admission to employment*, 6 June 1973

ILO Convention n°182 *Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour*, 17 June 1999

ILO Convention n°138, Op. cit. note 2 at Article 1

ILO Recommendation n°146 *Concerning the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment*, 6 June 1973

"The State of the World's Children 1997", UNICEF Report, Geneva, 1997, available at http://www.unicef.org/sowc97/report/

LSMS/ Living Standard Measurement Survey, conducted by INSTAT 2002, 2005

WOOD, G., *"Staying secure, staying poor: The 'Faustian bargain'"*, in *World Development,* Oxford, Vol. 31, No.3, March 2003, p. 456

GRUMIAU, S., *"Child Labour in Albania: Report on the current situation and guidelines for action by Albanian"*, trade unions Report by for the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), Brussels, 2004 available at http://www.icftu.org/www/PDF/AlbaniareportEN.pdf

"The End of Child Labour: Within Reach", ILO report, Geneva, 2006, available at http://www.ilo.org/declaration.

BASU, K., "The economics of child labour", in *Scientific American,* New York, Vol. 289, No. 4, Oct. 2003, pp. 84-91

Findings from the Albania Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Primary Report, page 18, UNICEF, 2006

"Boas práticas de combate ao trabalho infantil: os 10 anos do Ipec no Brasil", ILO Report, Brasilia, 2003

COLCLOUGH, C., LEWIN, K., Educating all the children: Strategies for primary schooling in the South, Oxford, Clarendon, 1993, p. 89

LIANG, X., *China: Challenges of secondary education* , World Bank, Washington D.C., 2001, pp. 15-16

IPEC project on combating the worst forms of child labour in Turkey – Supporting the time-bound national policy and programme for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour in Turkey (2004-06)

SOMAVIA, J., in the preface to *"The End of Child Labour Within Reach",* ILO Report , Geneva, 2006*,* p. ix

AGENDA Institute was founded in 2006 as a *think tank,* non-governmental, independent organization which operates in the areas of Good Governance, European Integration and Neighbourhood European Policies, and Policies for Social and Economic Development.

Mission

- To encourage and empower currently democratic experiences, by promoting democratic values during the debate processes, analyses and of the public policies implementation in the country.
- Making the process of policy-making less politicized, by offering to the policy-makers key information based in researches.

Target groups

- Public
- Policy-makers
- Media
- Business Community

Researches Areas

- Good Governance
- European Integration and Neighbourhood Integration Policies
- Policies for Social and Economic Development

Policy Briefs

Policy Briefs are series of analyses on country's main public policies and strategies, prepared by AGENDA Institute with the support of Open Society Institute (OSI), Hungary.

Rr. Mustafa Matohiti, No 4/3,
Tirana Albania
Tel/Fax: +355-4-258884
Website: www.agendainstitute.org
E-mail: info@agendainstitute.org